

REMARKS

Claims 1-17 are pending in the present application, with claims 1, 16, and 17 being independent.

Applicants note with appreciation, the Examiner's indication on page 2 of the Office Action that claims 1 and 16 are generic. It appears, however, that the Examiner indicated claim 17 as being a dependent claim and stated that claim 17 is a distinct species in Group VII. Claim 17, however, is independent and generic. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner indicate independent claim 17 as being generic and also examine claim 17 on the merits, because claim 17 was never subjected to a restriction requirement.

Regarding the election requirement between the dependent claims, Applicants elect, with traverse, Group IV, which includes dependent claims 5, 6, 7, and 8.

Furthermore, Applicants note that the non-elected claims should be subjected to rejoinder upon allowance of their base claim, namely independent claim 1.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Martin R. Geissler (Reg. No. 51,011) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview

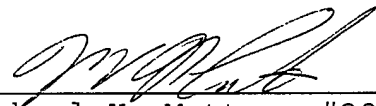
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in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By  #39,491
for Michael K. Mutter, #29,680

MKM/MRG:tm
1163-0318P

P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000